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III.—GRATITUDE AND INGRATITUDE IN THE PLAYS OF EURIPIDES.

For some reason, modern literature treats ingratitude as the most enormous of sins. To portray an act in the most unfavorable light and put it at once beyond the possibility of defense it is enough to call it ungrateful. Consequently writers of our time are apt to stigmatize as ingratitude acts which, while doubtless unlovely, are yet primarily something else.

Certain periods of English literature have gone to great extremes in this direction. The English novel of the eighteenth century depicts *ad nauseam* the "ingratitude" of the lady who does not return her lover's affection, however unattractive he may be in her eyes, and however disagreeable he may have rendered himself to her.

Again, Shakespeare in particular, but modern literature in general, lays great emphasis upon political ingratitude. The Romans are called ungrateful in turning from Pompey to Cæsar, as well as in their treatment of the erring Coriolanus. The conduct of those who violate the ties of kinship, especially those who disregard the duty due to father or mother, is styled ingratitude. Izaak Walton's Lives of five worthies of his time is full of references to gratitude and ingratitude of one kind and another, and throughout this period the mention of gratitude and ingratitude seems to have been a literary fashion.

It is perfectly natural, if at times a little overdone. A little comparison with Greek literature, however, will make it clear that the Greeks analyzed better than we and had not yet attained our convenient inaccuracy and generalization. In their eyes the ill treatment of a faithful lover is unfaithfulness, or treachery; ill treatment of one's father is unfilial conduct and the Greek needed to search no further for a term to bring out its utter repulsiveness.

It may not be devoid of interest and profit to examine in the light of these introductory remarks one of the principal Greek poets. It is usual to speak of Euripides as the most modern of the ancient dramatists. Both because of the relatively large amount of his extant work and because of this modernness he

forms a suitable subject for our study. With all his modernness, we shall find that, while not avoiding entirely the mention of gratitude and its opposite, he avoids very obvious opportunities for the employment of these motives. The plays vary greatly in their employment of the motive which we are discussing. Some of them, the Bacchae, the Troades, and the Cyclops, are practically free from it. This is because of their subject, and the non-appearance of the motive has no significance.

In other plays, however, the poet fails to take advantage of obvious opportunities. Andromache,[1] dying for her son, makes no claim upon his gratitude, but is set upon being avenged by his means, though not at his hands. In the Electra no one expresses gratitude either to the peasant for his noble treatment of his royal wife, or to the slave who on the night of Agamemnon's murder had saved Orestes from death and now offers to perform a service of some danger. Not even to the trusty Pylades is any word of gratitude expressed.[2] In the Helena, Theonoe receives no thanks from Menelaus. We observe, however, that his request to her had expressly been made, not for a favor, but for an act of justice, so that any claim for gratitude is perhaps discounted in advance. Helen had promised the chorus that for their generous conduct in aiding her escape she would include them in the rescue, if it were convenient. It proves inconvenient and she leaves them behind. But for this she incurs no word of criticism, and no charge of ingratitude. Nor does the deceived Theoclymenus hint at any ingratitude on her part, although she seems to make a promise of gratitude to him.[3] In this play the conduct of Helen is not resented at all. Certainly the poet does not utter any expression of resentment and we are left to imagine how Theoclymenus and the chorus viewed conduct which seems to us ungrateful.

In several of the plays, however, resentment for such conduct finds expression, and it is with these that we must pursue our investigation. Does the expression of resentment issue in a

[1] Andromache, 410 ff.

[2] Electra gives him a crown and wishes continued prosperity for him, 887 ff.

[3] 1420—unless her words are a *double entendre*.

charge of ingratitude, or does it tend to assume some other form?

Hippolytus might fairly, it would seem, have reproached Artemis with ingratitude. The ingratitude of the gods to their worshipers is a note frequently struck in Greek literature, when there is far less apparent justification for it than here. This motive cannot arise until worship becomes more (or less) than a duty and is considered a favor to the deity worshiped. Such has been the worship Hippolytus has rendered to Artemis. He has gone far beyond his strict duty and so the shabby conduct of the goddess with her weak explanation for it savors of ingratitude. Euripides probably recognized, if he did not maliciously emphasize, the shallowness of Artemis' excuse for leaving her dying votary.[4] But of any ingratitude of the deity there is no hint. Hippolytus, somewhat disagreeably conscious of his virtue, seems to feel that there is something wrong with "this sorry scheme of things entire" when such a man as he is condemned to perish in such a way. He tells Zeus as much (1363 ff.) but does not charge him with ingratitude. Still less does his loyalty to Artemis permit him to bring such an indictment against her. Indeed he does not even express resentment. His father, Theseus, on the other hand does bitterly resent the supposed conduct of Hippolytus but does not, as Lear might, charge him with ingratitude. He upbraids him for his self-conscious virtue and hints at the unfilial character of his conduct, but nothing more.[5]

The two Iphigenia plays abound in unused opportunities to express gratitude or bring a charge of ingratitude In the Aulis play it would be natural to express gratitude to Achilles for his help to Iphigenia and Clytemnestra and to Iphigenia for her voluntary sacrifice. The former of these is, to say the least, not emphasized. Achilles is rewarded only by the formal remark that the stranger should be praised for his zeal in their behalf (1371).[6] Nor is the second opportunity used any more

[4] Contrast the conduct and words of the human Theseus in Hercules Furens 1233 ff.; 1400.

[5] The nearest approach to the mention of ingratitude—and it is not very near—is the cry of Hippolytus that his accursed steeds, fed with his own hand, have been the death of him (1355 ff.).

[6] Praise, expressed by *αἰνεῖν* or by *ἐπαινεῖν*, is given to a messenger

fully. Iphigenia fixes her attention on the glory she will gain by her sacrifice rather than on any public gratitude from which that glory might spring (1383 f., 1398 f.). There is no mention of the attitude of the state to her except in the promise of the chorus (1504) that glory shall ever be hers.

Of the possible charges of ingratitude, that against Agamemnon by his wife is only partially developed. She does begin an account of her faithfulness to him but instead of saying "Do not make me such a poor return," she says rather, "Do not compel me to be anything but good to you" (1183 f.)—a threat, distinct if veiled, and probably used with a view to the line of argument she subsequently adopts to defend her conduct.

There is a hint that Agamemnon will be ungrateful to his country if he fail to give it this precious sacrifice. Menelaus reminds him (334 ff.) that when he aspired to command the Greeks he was humble to all, but now that he is in a position of command and actually able to save the army, he is not the same man. To him is applied the epithet κακός (349),[7] which is elsewhere used to characterize the ungrateful, but is of course a broad and general term.

The clearest reference to gratitude is along a quite unexpected line. Iphigenia reminds Agamemnon how she used to perch on his knee and ask "Shall I receive thee, father, when thou art old, in the dear hospitality of my house?" πόνων τιθηνοὺς ἀποδιδοῦσά σοι τροφάς; (1228 ff.)—a reference to the τροφεῖα, which Iphigenia acknowledges as her debt to her father.

The Iphigenia in Tauris affords four opportunities to emphasize gratitude: (1) on the part of Orestes to Pylades for help and support; (2) of Iphigenia to King Thoas; (3) of Iphigenia to her chorus of attendants; (4) of Iphigenia for the good news that Orestes is still alive. All these are touched but lightly. When Pylades offers to remain and suffer in his friend's place, Orestes emphasizes his refusal to consent by mentioning his own deep obligation to Pylades. But it is not ingratitude of

for the news he brings (440) and to Iphigenia for a comforting word to her father (655). Praise and gratitude are not necessarily the same thing. See an editorial Praise vs. Gratitude in the New York Times for March 17, 1922.

[7] Cp. 1184.

which he would be guilty if he fell in with Pylades' plans. His conduct would be unjust (601), disgraceful (606), distressing and reprehensible (*λυπρὸν κἀπονείδιστον*, 689). To the Greek there were lower depths than ingratitude. Similarly, Iphigenia refuses to kill Thoas to aid her escape, not because she would thus be ungrateful, but because she would violate the sacred tie of hospitality (1021).

When the chorus consent at the risk of their own lives to assist an escape in which they may not share, Iphigenia expresses her gratitude only by a wish for their happiness (1078); and when Athena commands Orestes to rescue them, the duty is considered as an act, not of gratitude, but of justice (1469). Whatever gratitude is involved in the transaction belongs to Athena not to the chorus. "I saved you at the Areopagus" she says, "now you do as much for them"—an approximation, at least, to the Christian principle that gratitude to God may find its best expression in service to men.

With less reason Iphigenia's act in aiding the robbery of the Artemis temple is called a traitorous and forgetful return to the goddess who had saved her at Aulis (1419). But there is another side to this. Artemis had also destroyed her at Aulis.

The fourth opportunity is little emphasized. Thoas warns Iphigenia that the strange tale she has heard may be nothing but an invention of the two young men to earn her gratitude and secure their safety (1184). But her gratitude is not apparent either for the news or for the happy event itself. She expresses no gratitude to any of the great gods, nor indeed to any gods at all, unless by the "hearths of Mycenae and her native land" (845 f.) are meant the gods of the Argolid, and to these her gratitude is expressed for her birth and upbringing.

In the Alcestis the motive which we are discussing is handled in a peculiarly interesting way. The play affords abundant opportunity to introduce the motive of gratitude.

Admetus owes much to his wife and she properly demands gratitude for it:

σύ νύν μοι τῶνδ' ἀπόμνησαι χάριν (299).

Even if we render the words "remember the favor I do you," the implication is that gratitude will keep him true to his

promise to marry no second wife. But when later in the play the test comes, Admetus says that yielding to temptation would be, not ingratitude, but treachery to his benefactor. The use of the word 'benefactor' (1058) shows that, although the basic thought is the oft-stressed idea of treachery to a lover, the idea of ingratitude is present, if not fully expressed and isolated from other elements. Vague and fleeting as it is, this is the only hint that any gratitude is due from Admetus to the woman who gave her life for his.

Admetus owes a great debt to Heracles. For this Heracles receives no word of explicit thanks. Its place is taken, as often in Euripides, by a wish for his prosperity (1137 f.):

> εὐδαιμονοίης, καί σ' ὁ φιτύσας πατὴρ
> σώζοι.

See also 1153.

In the unseemly altercation between father and son, it would be a natural reply to the unreasonable demands of the son to remind him of all his father had already done for him and brand as ingratitude his forgetfulness of those benefits. Nothing of the sort do we find, however. In the very act of reminding his son that he had brought him up, Pheres expressly disclaims any merit whatever for that. He had done only his clear duty, only what his own father had done for him. I have elsewhere [8] called attention to the fact that the ancient was by no means so sure as the modern seems to be that the son owes his father a debt of gratitude for begetting him or even for bringing him up to years of discretion. I believe it is Lowes Dickinson who observes that the Greek made no attempt to obscure the fact that he derived a real and tangible benefit from bringing a son into the world. And if, as Seneca insists, one owes no gratitude for a favor which it is not possible for him to refuse,[9] it is hard to see why a son need be grateful for what happened before he was in a position to say anything about it. Curiously enough, it is Admetus who reproaches his father with the return he is receiving from his parents after being such a dutiful son (658 ff.).

[8] T. A. P. A., Vol. 48, p. 46.
[9] De Beneficiis 2, 18, 7.

So far as Admetus and Heracles are concerned, the latter expresses more gratitude than the former. Hospitality under such circumstances Heracles feels to be a real favor and his zeal to repay it is not the least lovable element in his character (859 f., 1072 ff.). To a modern reader, at least, there is a significant contrast between the reticence of Admetus in acknowledging a large service and the readiness of Heracles to repay a comparatively small one at fearful risk.

At the very end of the play (1154 ff.) Admetus gives orders for a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the gods, a feature which is comparatively rare in our poet and which I have shown elsewhere [10] is much less common in the earlier Greek literature than is usually supposed, certainly less common than I had thought.

If the Alcestis presents an unusual view of the relation between father and son, the Medea and the Ion differ from modern literature in their handling of ingratitude to a lover, married or unmarried.

I have already noted the excessive stress which English writers, especially of the eighteenth century, laid upon the "ingratitude" of a woman who refuses to consider the advances of a lover, or of a man who forsakes a woman that loves him. From this point of view, Apollo is ungrateful to Creusa. His conduct can scarcely be treated as an instance of ingratitude of the gods to their worshipers; it is clearly a matter of a lover's ingratitude to his mistress. The divinity of the lover only accentuates the enormity of his conduct. Yet, Apollo is accused, not of ingratitude, but of injustice and rascality—and properly enough, for whatever pleasure Creusa had given him was certainly not of her free volition and could hardly be a matter for gratitude.[11] So the words of Creusa λέκτρων προδότας ἀχαρίστους (880) connote, perhaps, gracelessness rather than ingratitude. The words are applied, however, not only to Apollo, but also to her husband whom she now believes to have been untrue to her.

[10] T. A. P. A. 43, 77 ff. There is a mention of gratitude in line 70 f., where Apollo says that if Death does not accede to his request, οὐθ' ἡ παρ' ἡμῶν σοι γενήσεται χάρις—but these lines are rejected by Dindorf, Kirchoff, Nauck and Prinz.

[11] But compare Hecuba 828 ff.

In 912 ff. there is a hint that in her heart of hearts she thinks of Apollo as an ingrate. She complains that Apollo has given her husband a son, although he had received no favor from him (and consequently owed him no gratitude). Her child, on the other hand, Apollo had suffered to die unnoticed. The antithesis would certainly be better if she meant that from her Apollo *had* received a favor, in the form of pleasure or gratification. In 1099 ff. she accuses Apollo of forgetfulness. Is it of the pleasure he had received from her or of his duties as a husband? We cannot say that the notion of ingratitude is anywhere clearly expressed but sometimes Euripides seems on the verge of expressing it.

Apollo's conduct is bad enough, but Jason's treatment of Medea is even baser. To the Greek and to the modern his conduct cannot seem other than abominably ungrateful, but in this play it is stigmatized under other names. It would be an interesting study to trace in the various literary handlings of the Medea story the development of the ingratitude motive. The Medea of Euripides feels that Jason is making her a poor return for all she has done to help him (22 f., 476 ff., 1351 ff., but nowhere does she call his conduct ungrateful. She stigmatizes it as perjury (1392, 439, 495), or as treachery (489, 578, cp. 606). Probably the πατρῴᾳ νόσῳ (1364) is marital unfaithfulness rather than ingratitude, and in set terms Medea taunts Jason with infidelity (489). His actions are called unjust (578, 692), disgraceful (695), and inhospitable (1392). All these reproaches are summed up in the word which the Greeks often use where we would probably speak of ingratitude (κακός 84, 465, 488, 690). Medea does employ the word ἀχάριστος, which became conventional to express ingratitude, but as she uses it (659, cp. Ion 880) it seems to mean rather 'graceless' ('devoid of worth'—Everyman translation) or possibly "ungraced." [12]

In the Hecuba there appears a new element in our study,—a conflict of gratitudes, a conflict on a less tragic plane than the conflict of duties which confronted Orestes, but, equally with that, a conflict between duty to the dead and duty to the living,

[12] Why not "unfriended," as Earle translates it?—C. W. E. M.

and with the same decision in favor of the departed. In her dire straits Hecuba reminds Odysseus how she had saved him when he came as a spy to Troy (251 ff., 272 ff.). Odysseus answers by balancing her claim against that of the dead Achilles, who had demanded as his right the immolation of Hecuba's daughter, Polyxena, upon his tomb (299 ff.). There is no definite statement that to decline his request would be ingratitude but that such was the feeling is clear from lines 138 f.

> ὡς ἀχάριστοι Δαναοὶ Δαναοῖς
> τοῖς οἰχομένοις ὑπὲρ Ἑλλήνων.[13]

Hecuba has one other claim on the gratitude of a Greek prince, this time a far more equivocal one. Despairingly she brings it forward. Her daughter Cassandra is the concubine of Agamemnon. Will he not grant to her, and through her to her mother,

> τῶν ἐν εὐνῇ φιλτάτων ἀσπασμάτων
> χάριν τίν' (829 ff.)?

Of course this appeal must fail where the more strongly founded claim on Odysseus proved unavailing.[14]

In the Medea the conflict of gratitudes is weakened to the choice of gratitudes. When Medea details to Jason the services she has rendered him he admits that he should be grateful for his deliverance but declares that his gratitude shall be paid, not to Medea who had saved him, but to Aphrodite under whose inspiration Medea had been constrained to save him, whether she would or not. These two gratitudes are not in opposition as in the Hecuba. Both claims could be satisfied, but the small-souled Jason confines himself to one, and, of the two, selects that which costs him nothing to meet.

In the Orestes, Electra and her brother expect their uncle Menelaus to save them from impending exile. Here the claim of kinship might well have been made the basis of their ex-

[13] Matthaei, Studies in Greek Tragedy, p. 131, emphasizes a bit too much the idea of gratitude to a public benefactor. The point, it seems to me, is not so much that he is a public benefactor, as that he is dead.

[14] Cp. Matthaei, Studies in Greek Tragedy, p. 148.

pectation, but their request is based rather on what one friend owes another. Menelaus is asked to remember the favors which he had received from Agamemnon. In his reply he ignores the appeal to his gratitude and he is called κάκιστε (719), a term that is often applied to ingrates.

Now in contrast with the supineness of Menelaus the kinsman, Euripides proceeds to portray the zeal of Pylades the friend. In accepting the latter's assistance, Orestes (804 ff.) draws the contrast explicitly and thus enhances the baseness of Menelaus. Menelaus was their kinsman and had received favors from their father. He proves recreant. Pylades was not a kinsman and there had been accorded him no favors to inspire gratitude. He offers his all. Agamemnon had a brother but lacked a friend (721). Orestes, aglow with friendship, would like to think of the relation between Agamemnon and Menelaus as one of friendship and had tried to put the obligation on that plane (740); but the logic of events is too much for him and he is compelled to shift his ground to the lower plane of kinship in contrast with the more perfect relation which subsists between himself and Pylades. Now it would seem that gratitude, properly speaking, existed pre-eminently, if not exclusively, between friends. So Orestes calls the conduct of Menelaus treachery to one's kin (1463). This it is with which he taunts Helen as he prepares to slay her, and this he flings in the face of Menelaus himself when he threatens to kill Hermione (1588).

Gratitude, then, is a higher motive than mere kinship. But there is something higher yet. Gratitude itself, viewed as the mere desire to return the favor one has received, perhaps in order to get rid of the uncomfortable feeling of being under obligation, falls short of real friendship, which transcends, if it does not ignore, all considerations of gratitude. This is exemplified in the Hercules Furens. The friendship of Heracles and Theseus is a beautiful feature of this play. Theseus, it is true, had received in past time a great favor from his friend, but his own conduct in the play is based not so much on any desire to return the favor as on the sublimer ground of friendship, though the obligation of gratitude is expressly recognized (1235, 1336). The feeling that Theseus voices is, in general, pity rather than gratitude (1237 f.). Heracles, the original

benefactor, expresses his gratitude with a definiteness and warmth that are unusual in our poet (1351 f.).[1]

Two of our author's plays are definite pieces of war propaganda. The Heraclidae puts the brand of infamy upon the Argives, perhaps at the time when they broke their bond with the Athenians and made peace with Sparta; the Supplices reminds the Argives once more what Athens had done for them in times past.

Much has been made of political ingratitude both in ancient and in modern times. Thucydides often refers to it. So do Demosthenes, Aeschines and Isocrates, among the orators. The motive of political gratitude has certainly been sadly overworked, till men have expressed doubts whether, in the realm of the state, gratitude has any place. It needs to be noted, however, that, whereas in modern times much is made of the ingratitude of a state to one of its citizens, in ancient Greek literature it is more apt to be a question of the relation between one state and another. Herodotus lets fall no hint that Athens showed any ingratitude to Miltiades when she punished him for his criminal attempt upon Paros. Reread the Coriolanus and you will see what Shakespeare would have done with this theme.

The Heraclidae affords abundant opportunity to emphasize gratitude. Iolaus appeals to Demophon not only as a suppliant but on the ground of the service he and Heracles had rendered in bringing Demophon's father back from Hades (215 ff.). To Iolaus Demophon admits this claim, but when he refuses to give up the Heraclidae to Copreus (the herald of Eurystheus), he bases his refusal, not on the gratitude he owes their father, but on the fact that they are suppliants at his altars. Perhaps he feels that the finer and less familiar motive would not appeal to a mind like that of Copreus. In return Iolaus conjures the Heraclidae to deem the Athenians forever their saviours and their friends and never to engage in war against them (312 ff., cp. 334). Their ancestral foe, Eurystheus, captured and doomed to die to satisfy the vengeance of Alcmena, repays the city for a rather spiritless and ineffectual defense of him by giving his body as a palladium, so that even in death he will be a foe to those who will ungratefully invade the Attic land (1035 f.).

[1] Cf. the gratitude of Heracles in the Alcestis: see p. 337.

The second part of the play offers an opportunity to express the appreciation and gratitude of the state for Macaria's sacrifice of herself. She had decided to volunteer, not to await the decision of the lot (547 ff.):

οὐκ ἂν θάνοιμι τῇ τύχῃ λαχοῦσ' ἐγώ·
χάρις γὰρ οὐ πρόσεστι·

Does this mean that the act would lose all its grace, or is there an idea that the state owes gratitude for a voluntary sacrifice as it would not for a death due under compulsion,—that the death in battle of a volunteer is on a different basis from that of a drafted man? Later (588) she asks to be interred as a σώτειρα should be. No one, other than herself, expresses any idea that gratitude is due her.[15]

In the Supplices, the motive of gratitude, equally fundamental, is skilfully held in reserve. All through the play there is abundant opportunity for its expression. But the Argives are so overwhelmed with grief that they express no gratitude until Theseus, their benefactor, himself demands it. The chorus of mothers of the fallen Argive heroes sing of the friendship Athens will win by helping Adrastus now (373 f.). The terminology smacks of unequivocal gratitude.[16] They prophesy rather than express gratitude however—emphasizing future conduct rather than present feeling. And after their dead have been rescued and properly buried, they still express no gratitude but remark that by such an act Athens has earned glory (779 ff.).

But the political purpose of the poet in writing the play demands something quite unequivocal. In 1169 ff. Theseus makes explicit demand that the Argives hold in eternal remembrance the favor they have received from Athens. Adrastus acknowledges their debt and their duty to repay it (1176 ff.).

[15] In the Phoenissae no gratitude is expressed to Menoeceus for his sacrifice of himself. There is, however, a hint that Menoeceus feels gratitude to the state and this feeling influences him to offer himself for its salvation. He cannot betray the land that gave him birth (996). It would be cowardly to betray father and kin and town (1003 ff.).

[16] χάριν ἔχει τὰν ἐς ἀεί (374). χάριν ἔχειν is probably the commonest of the many ways in which the Greek can express gratitude.

Even this acknowledgement is not deemed sufficient for the poet's purpose and, at the behest of Athena, Theseus exacts from Adrastus an oath that the Argives not only will not attack Athens but will defend it, if it be attacked by others (1185 ff.). That is, the subsequent conduct of Argos, against which the whole play is a protest, is put on the plane of perjury—to the Greek a distinctly baser thing than ingratitude,—and the chorus departs swearing eternal friendship to Theseus and his city for the toils they have endured in behalf of Argos.

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